

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 572

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 9515

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET US

SUBJECT: SENATE HEARINGS ON ETHIOPIA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 9363

1. ONLY ADDITIONAL REACTION TO SENATE HEARINGS ON ETHIOPIA REPORTED REFTEL THUS FAR HAS COME FROM BERHANE DERESSA, CHIEF, AMERICAS DIVISION, MOFA. AT SOCIAL FUNCTION JUST AFTER HAVING READ SCHAUFLE STATEMENT, HE TOLD EMBOFF HE WAS "ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED" AT WAY HEARINGS HAD GONE. FOLLOWING DAY BERHANE TOLD CHARGE UNDER MORE FORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HE CONSIDERED SCHAUFLE STATEMENT TO BE "GOOD, BALANCED STATEMENT" AND WAS SO CHARACTERIZING IT TO "HIS SUPERIORS."

2. MEDIA HAS CONTINUED IGNORE HEARINGS ENTIRELY INCLUDING U.S. PRESS COVERAGE. SINCE IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT MEDIA WOULD MAKE ANY REFERENCE TO HEARINGS UNLESS EPMG CHOSE TO TAKE EXCEPTION TO THEM, THIS FAILURE IN A CURIOUS WAY COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A POSITIVE RATHER THAN NEGATIVE SIGN, I.E., THAT THE DIRG WAS EITHER A) RELIEVED, B) REASSURED OR C) COULD FIND NOTHING THEY REALLY WANTED TO TAKE ISSUE WITH IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE STATEMENT (OR ALL THREE) AND HAS THEREFORE CHOSEN REMAIN SILENT. WE SHALL PROBABLY HAVE TO WAIT FOR A
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TIME TO SEE WHAT IF ANYTHING DEVELOPS BEFORE WE CAN

DETERMINE ACCURACY OF THIS INTERPRETATION OR PERHAPS
UNTIL FONMIN KIFLE RETURNS FROM COLOMBO CONFERENCE.
BERHANE'S COMMENTS ARE ENCOURAGING AND MAY EVEN TURN
OUT TO REFLECT MONFA VIEW. IT WOULD BE PREMATURE, HOW-
EVER, TO ASSUME THEY ALSO REFLECT DIRG'S, ALTHOUGH IF
DIRG'S REACTION HAD BEEN SHARPLY NEGATIVE, CHANCES ARE
BERHANE WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF AND TEMPERED HIS OWN VIEWS.
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